

ARIZONA VETERANS' SERVICE ADVISORY COMMISSION
4141 N. Third Street –Phoenix, AZ 85012
Thursday – January 12, 2006

M I N U T E S

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Vice-Chairman Piotrowski.

Members Present

Advisory Commission Members

Mary Ellen Piotrowski, Vice Chairperson
Robert Boyd
Tom Dingwall
Phillip Quochoytewa
Kenneth Yamanouchi

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Gabe Forsberg, Strategic Planner

Members Absent:

Webb Ellis, Chairperson (pre-arranged)
Linda Fulkerson (ill)

Guests – Ray Thomas, Veterans of Foreign Wars

Approval of Minutes - Minutes of the December 15, 2005 meeting were approved as written.

Communications

Vice-Chair Piotrowski read a communication from Webb Ellis, Chairman, wishing all a healthy, happy New Year.

There were 53 letters sent out January 6, 2006 and to all veterans service organizations and 21 letters to tribal contacts to solicit candidates to fill two Advisory Commission vacancies. The extended deadline to submit applications is January 20, 2006.

Agency Announcements and Updates

Legislation

Vice-Chair Piotrowski reported that Pat Chorpenning would not be available today to make his normal report because he was at the Senate Committee on Government, supporting various bills of importance to veterans. She reviewed the bills heard by the House Counties, Municipalities, and Military Affairs Committee on January 10, 2006. The following were heard:

- H.B. 2054 - Tax check-off; veterans donation fund
- H.B. 2055 - Purple heart recipients; tuition waiver
- H.B. 2056 - Military support specialty license plates
- H.B. 2057 - National guard; uniform allowances
- H.B. 2058 - National guard; tuition waivers; spouses
- H.B. 2059 - Arizona Department of Veterans Services; powers and duties
- H.B. 2060 - Military airport disclosure; residential property
- H.B. 2061 - Veterans; proper burial

All bills were recommended for a “do pass” except for HB 2054. That bill required some minor changes and was slated for discussion in one week.

Veterans Task Force

The final report from the Arizona Veterans Task Force was distributed to each Commissioner.

Open Discussion / For the Good of the Order

Update of February Meetings

Commissioner Quochytewa confirmed that we will be meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, February 10, 2006. The entire Commission will be in attendance and the meeting will be posted in accordance with open meeting law. The meeting will be held in the San Carlos Tribal Council Building in San Carlos, Arizona 85550.

Vice-Chair Piotrowski discussed travel arrangements. The Commissioners who will be carpooling by van will need to leave the Arizona State Veteran Home by 11:00 a.m. on Friday, February 10, 2006. Gabe Forsberg will ensure the van has been reserved and lodging reservations have been made.

Good of the Order Announcements

Commissioner Quochytewa: With all of the Native American veteran issues that are coming to light, he was pleased to see that Royce Jenkins was interested in seeking a Senate seat in District #2. Mr. Jenkins was a former staffer on Senator McCain’s office and is a Native American veteran.

He participated in a welcoming ceremony held for Kelly Sockyouma, a Native American female warrior, coming back from Iraq last Saturday. Commissioner Quochytewa asked if the Director would prepare a letter to be signed by the Governor to express appreciation of female veterans returning. Commissioner Dingwall asked if other returning troops have received this type of letter, and it does not appear that it has been done in the past. While every returning National Guard service member should feel appreciated, the Advisory Commission did not feel that this practice should be initiated now. The 2000+ National Guard troops who have returned have not received this type of individual letter signed by the Governor.

Commissioner Boyd: African-American Legislature Day is on February 9 and 10, which will make it impossible for him to attend the Native American pre-meeting on February 10, 2006.

He asked for specific advice on assisting a 92-year veteran who was in his home with no electricity. Commissioner Dingwall provided some ideas to assist him in obtaining home health care.

Jim Peterson, a veteran, is running against Senator Jon Kyl and is meeting with various veterans service organizations.

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m. The next meeting is a special meeting that will be held on February 10, 2006 in San Carlos, Arizona 85550. The purpose of that meeting is to discuss Native American veterans. The next regular meeting is also the Region 3 meeting. It will be held on February 11, 2006, at the American Legion Post #32, located at 531 Eleventh Avenue in Safford, AZ 85546.